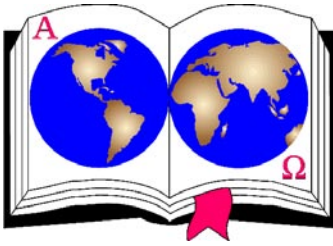




Meet These Men!  
Update on Italy

***March-May 2007***  
***News and Prayer Letter***



# Reformation Christian Ministries

## News & Prayer Letter

### March-May 2007

***And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Corinthians 12:9***

The first part of this year has been filled with challenges and adversity, first in rearranging the work in Italy due to the death of our dear friend, Dr. Franco Maggiotto, and then more recently with the resurgence of some heart-health problems for myself. This was all in addition to the finalizing of headquarters construction project and my other church and ministry responsibilities.

For those of you who don't get our email updates and thus don't know about my recent health issues, here is a brief synopsis. In February, I became convinced that my long-standing heart disease had produced another blockage of an artery around my heart. After searching for an appropriate cardiologist who would not rush me into surgery or a long regimen of drugs, as had been the case in 1995; we located a like-minded doctor in Miami Beach. After a series of external tests, he concluded that I had a blockage in one artery that could likely be treated without surgery. However, as events unfolded, some new symptoms appeared that proved to him that I needed to have an angiogram (an invasive procedure that inspects the arteries surrounding the heart for blockages). Anticipating only one blockage, it was a shock to all of us to discover there were four, and that normal protocol was open heart surgery. After consultation with my doctor, I opted for a series of four angioplasties using stents rather than open heart surgery. This was successfully accomplished in a series of two visits to the hospital. The only downside is that I am now on prescription blood thinners and aspirin.

Interestingly, through this process I was able to explain the Gospel both with my doctor (several times) and with an Orthodox Jew who was a roommate for several days.

During this time, the Lord had brought to us a serious candidate to aid in our ongoing work in Italy. We had arranged to fly him over to the US for interviews before we knew about the need for my surgery. In God's providence, my last surgical procedure was completed on Monday, April 16. I was released on Tuesday and on Thursday, our Italian guest came in from Switzerland.

One major sacrifice during this time was that we were unable to keep up with our normal newsletter schedule, for which I sincerely apologize. We greatly appreciate the faithfulness of so many who support our work to send in their donations without the normal monthly newsletter. However, giving was down somewhat because many do rely upon the newsletter as a reminder. Nevertheless, it has again become abundantly clear to us that God has yet much work for me to do and thus has again spared my life from a heart attack or other serious injury, all the while showing His abundant grace

and strength throughout the innumerable weaknesses and adversities we have experienced. Please rejoice with us and praise Him for this provision. I now will get on with the business of bringing you up to date on what is going on with RCM for which your ongoing prayer and other support is most needed and appreciated.

THREE MAJOR ITEMS IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

1. Teacher needed in Suriname
2. Professor Philip Stott from South Africa coming to the U.S.A. and Canada for a series of lectures on Science and the Bible in October (book him early if you are interested).
3. Update on a candidate for the work and ministry in Italy (this is an incredible answer to prayer).

*Geoffrey Donnan*

## TEACHER NEEDS IN SURINAME

Christian Liberty Academy in Suriname has a serious need for two Christian teachers in the High School, for the school year which begins August, 2007. We ask you to please pray about this need and talk to others about it, and do what you can to help us. To that end Rev. Poettcker has interviewed two teachers who have been teaching in Suriname this past year; perhaps you could show this to people who may be interested. Thank you so very much for your help! (Their full interviews are on our website at [www.reformation.ws](http://www.reformation.ws) under Suriname: Christian Liberty Academy).

Greta Visscher from Surrey, B.C., Canada teaching High School English & Math

Courtney Withington from Raleigh, North Carolina USA teaches Junior High English & English as Second Language courses.

**Interviews:**

**Rev. Poettcker: Now that you have been living and working in Suriname for a while...**

**1. What is the most surprising things to you about living and working in Suriname?**

**Courtney:** *One of the first big surprises was that I'd be teaching math as well as English, but that soon became not such a big issue once I looked over the curriculum and taught a few classes. Also, I was surprised that no one was sitting in on the first day of classes that I taught. The English as Second Language II class also surprised me; first, because I was teaching it, and then because there was no set curriculum. I think I was expecting a more standardized or formal introduction to teaching when I first started. As for living here, I have to give thanks to the Lord that I can say the most surprising thing is how easily I have adjusted to feeling at home here.*



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Fields: Albania, Italy, Russia, U.K., Congo, Zambia, and Suriname.

Director of Missions: G. W. Donnan, Minister

Editor: G. W. Donnan  
Layout: David L. Card

(Continued on page 2.)



**Greta:** *-dealing with students was not as hard as I thought it might be. I knew from hearing about other new teachers at home, that the first year has the potential to be a disaster, but so far, by God's grace alone, mine has been going well. The students have never revolted and*

*said anything like 'you're too young to teach' or anything I was imagining might happen. I was able to get used to the climate. I think I even like the mugginess... I'm rarely very homesick ...-how much I like green mangoes and pepper.*

**Rev. Poettcker**

**2. What have you liked the most about living and working in Suriname?**

**Courtney:** *I like interacting with the students and working alongside the other teachers here. I've been very pleased with the working environment at CLA. I like the convenience of being able to live on campus, and I appreciate the accountability I have with those living around me.*

**Greta:** *-Being able to talk about God during Literature classes - hoping and praying that all of this will mean something to some of them someday. -Getting to know my students, especially through tutoring and class discussions. -Exploring the country - Tonka Island and Brownsberg especially, but also going to the interior church with Hassan and Debbie, going swimming, things like that... -Getting to know Courtney, Hannah, Fareza, Grant and Vonessa, Alney... they have all made a difference in my life and their friendship has been a huge blessing*

**Rev. Poettcker**

**3. What have you disliked the most about living and working in Suriname?**

**Courtney:** *I've had a challenging time fulfilling my role as disciplinarian in the classroom, but I think that goes along with being a first-year teacher regardless of location. I especially do not like the way that women are flagrantly sexualized here, even in the student body at times--I've not only had to pull girls aside about dress code standards, but also about having provocative pictures of themselves in their binders at school. As a female teacher, I often feel my sex is a disadvantage to be respected among the male students in particular.*

**Greta:** *-the lack of light in the apartment and the feeling of being closed in on the compound. It took a long time for this to be a problem for me and if I get a chance to go running, it's usually OK, but I do miss windows and sitting outside. -being whistled/hissed at while walking down the road - always feeling conspicuous when I go out in public.*

**Rev. Poettcker**

**4. What do you wish you had known in advance before coming to Suriname?**

**Courtney:** *I would have liked to have some idea of the school year schedule, lists of student names for each grade, as well as the quarter plans from the previous year. Even if they were only tentative, I think it would have helped to have some sense of what the year was going to look like.*

**Greta:** *-it would have been nice to see last year's lesson plans before coming. I had no idea what I would be teaching beyond the course name. If Vonessa had not been there...*

**Rev. Poettcker**

**5. What advice would you give to someone who is considering coming to Suriname?**

**Courtney:** *I would encourage them to ask all the questions they can think of, plus ask others for more*

*questions to ask. There's no reason to stay in the dark, so ask! I would also recommend volunteering at a school before coming, if possible, and talking with more experienced teachers one-on-one about how to prepare for teaching. It would be especially beneficial if you are able to talk with someone who has taught abroad before.*

**Greta:** *-it's fine if you've never taught before - that is something that can definitely be learned if you are willing BUT personal maturity is huge. Wes [Bredenhof] first mentioned Suriname to me when I was 18 and I was interested then already, but I am thankful for every year of life experience I've had since then to prepare me for this. -know something about education - ask questions from former teachers, read books, volunteer in local classrooms a little bit...you don't need an education degree, but you do need to know what education entails. -have your faith figured out ahead of time - know the answers to the 'hard questions' because students will ask eventually.*

**Rev. Poettcker**

**6. Do you feel that you were well-prepared for coming to Suriname (explain)?**

**Courtney:** *I'd say I was pretty well prepared--a lot of people were praying for me. I know they still are. I had forgotten to get some anti-biotic cream, so I got to learn about why that comes in handy here when my foot got infected the second day of school. Two things I brought that I haven't found a use for yet--VHS tapes (hardly anyone owns VCR players here) and a pair of heavy boots. Two things I wish I had--more pictures from home (to show people here as well as for the memories) and my big Oxford English Dictionary.*

**Greta:** *-I think I was as prepared as I could have been. Doing something like this will always be a leap of faith, but my years at university, my time away from home before, and my tutoring experience have all greatly helped me to do the work.*

**Rev. Poettcker**

**7. If the Administration were to invite you to, would you consider returning for another year? See website for answers.**

**Rev. Poettcker**

**8. Do you sense the support and care of Administration? (give details if you wish)**

**Courtney:** *Yes! Everyone here is very eager to help me as soon as they are able and answer any questions I have. (see more on web)*

**Greta:** *-Yes. Mr. Hamid has been extremely helpful when I have needed advice or feedback on lesson ideas. He has never given the impression that he doubted that I could do the work, even though I doubt myself often enough. (see more on web.)*

**Rev. Poettcker**

**9. Do you sense the support and care of co-workers? (See answers on web.)**

**Rev. Poettcker**

**10. Any general comments about your life and work in Suriname?**

**Courtney:** *I've enjoyed my experience of living in Suriname and working at CLA this first quarter because I have been able to do more than just work here. I've been able to experience being a part of the community of believers here, which has been the best part for me of it all!*

**Greta:** *-I greatly enjoy the church community and the fellowship at First Presbyterian Church. I feel that I am growing in my faith as a result of my being here.*

# Professor Philip Stott coming to North America



Professor Philip Stott, well known Bible and science lecturer and author, will be coming to North America in October of this year to provide a series of lectures on Science and Bible to any interested parties. He is presently engaged in late October in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and has been requested by a group in Southern California. He anticipates being able to stay here for approximately six weeks if the time is well booked. RCM will be arranging his itinerary.

Prof. Stott was born in England in 1943, and has maintained a life-long interest in several fields of science, himself being degreed in Civil Engineering, but having done much work in applied mathematics. It was after many years as a firm atheist that he was converted in 1976 in South Africa, where he presently resides. Since then he has lectured extensively throughout Africa, Russia, England and North America on the subjects at right. He presently is working on a Ph.D. in Science Education with our college. You can see his extensive work in that regard on our website at [www.reformation.ws](http://www.reformation.ws) (Scripture and science site). He will be available to lecture or hold conferences on the following subjects and is quite willing to involve himself in debates with scientists as well. This will be the fourth speaking tour that RCM has sponsored for him over the past fifteen years.

## SLIDE LECTURE TOPICS

### SCIENCE: FACT AND FANCY

Science is usually taken as the ultimate authority in modern society. How firm is the foundation modern science is standing on? Does it merit its status as the final arbiter of truth?

### WISDOM OF GOD AND THE WISDOM OF MAN

How do the pronouncements of God's word and those of "science" hold up to scrutiny?

### EVOLUTION

Is this a theory standing on solid ground or sinking in quicksand?

### TIME

How much of it is there? Is the creation really billions of years old? Is the evidence for those billions of years sound?

### THE FLOOD

Does the evidence of geology fit in with a world wide flood, or with billions of years of business as usual?

### WHERE IN THE UNIVERSE ARE WE?

Where are we in God's creation? Was Carl Sagan right in saying that if there were a God, He would never be able to find us?

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**March-May 2007**

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Contact me about working on the RCM Advisory Board  I would like to teach at C.L.A. in Suriname.

I would like to assist with the college and/or seminary program. I am sending a resume.

Please add this/these person(s) on your newsletter/e-mail list:

## ITALY UPDATE

We have been asking for your prayers for wisdom and guidance after the death of Dr. Franco Maggiotto with respect to the future of RCM's work in Italy. The Lord has providentially provided Giorgio Modolo as a committed man of the Reformed faith to act as our interim administrator for RCM in Italy. He, in turn, led us to consider someone as a possible member of the new Italy team committee.

I would like to share with you where we are at presently, **with the understanding** that at the moment, there are still a number of things that need to be finalized. However, with the permission of everyone involved, I am announcing to you that we are in serious discussions with Rev. Paolo Castellina. He is a man who was born as a Roman Catholic in the Piedmont area (capitol, Turin) of Italy. He was moved in the Protestant direction through the reading of John Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion and some time later left Roman Catholicism to attend an evangelical church in his hometown of Cuneo. After time in the Italian



*Rev. Paolo Castellina*

military, he received his seminary training at the International Baptist Seminary in Switzerland. Upon graduation he was offered a temporary post in the Italian speaking section of Switzerland with the Swiss Reformed Church where he was eventually ordained. He has served as a pastor in that church for the last twenty four

years. However, as his strongly reformed stance was increasingly unacceptable within his denomination, he began an outreach within Italy through a website that now has over 300 mb of information (<http://www.riforma.net>). His contract is up this year with his church and after looking at a number of opportunities, has become convinced that providence is leading him to join with Giorgio Modolo, with RCM's help, in the on-going effort of evangelizing and establishing churches throughout Italy.

He came to the U.S. from April 19-25, preached in our church, met with the RCM board as well as with Rev. Rudy Poettcker and was very well received. During May 25-28, Giorgio Modolo and myself will be visiting with him in Switzerland in hopes of working out the final details. We all presently sense that the Lord is bringing us together, but we need your prayers and support to bring this to pass. It will be a leap of faith on everyone's part to do this. I say this because of declining financial support for Italy since Franco Maggiotto's death. We are trusting that God will bring much of it back, but we need your prayers and commitments to encourage us forward.



*Rev. Paolo Castellina  
(l) meeting with RCM  
Board members  
(l-r) Rev. Jeff Boer,  
Mr. Raul Montes, and  
Rev. Geoff Donnan*

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